improved production technology, hybrid rice production technology, integrated pest management through field demonstrations; training of farmers including women; transfer of technology through electronic media and published literature; farm implements; installation of sprinkler irrigation system; varietal replacement; production of certified seeds, etc. Besides, frontline demonstrations are also organized by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) on farmers fields.

Growth of Agriculture Production

4662. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the first three years of the Tenth Five year Plan, the growth of agriculture production was below 1.5 per cent as against the target of 4.0 per cent;

(b) if so, the reasons for the shortfall of agriculture production;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government had decided to reverse the deceleration in the last decade; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. According to the data released by Central Statistical Organization (CSO), the growth rate in agriculture, including allied sectors of forestry & logging, and fishing, was negative (-7%) in 2002-03 while it was 9.6% in 2003-04. According to the advance estimates released by the CSO, growth rate in agriculture, including allied sectors, in 2004-05 is 1.1%. The average annual growth rate for the first three years of the Tenth Plan works out to 1.2%.

(b) Since about 60 per cent of the net sown area is rain-fed, agricultural production, is heavily influenced by rainfall. The year 2002-03 witnessed a severe drought that affected several States in the country. The favourable rainfall from the southwest monsoon in 2003-04 boosted agricultural production. However, the rainfall from the south-west monsoon in the year 2004-05 was deficient across time and space. Though the deficiency in rainfall from the south-west monsoon in 2004 was less serious than that in 2002 both for the whole season and for the agriculturally important month of July, the kharif crop production in 2004-05 was adversely affected by deficient rainfall.

(c) and (d) Keeping in view the importance of Agriculture in the economy, the Union Budget 2005-06 has provided substantial outlays in the areas like horticulture and irrigation including micro-irrigation. The Budget has provided Rs. 630 Crore in 2005-06 for National Horticulture Mission, which will ensure end-to-end approach having backward and forward linkages covering research, production, post-harvest management, processing and marketing, under one umbrella, in an integrated manner. The Budget has provided Rs. 4800 crore for Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme for 2005-06 compared with Rs. 2800 crore in 2004-05. With a view to improving water use efficiency in Indian agriculture, the Budget has provided Rs. 400 crore for promoting water use efficiency in Indian agriculture, the Budget has provided Rs. 400 crore for promoting micro irrigation in 2005-06. Since he flow of credit is important in accelerating the pace of investment in agriculture, the disbursement of agricultural credit is proposed to be stepping up by 30% in 2005-06 over the disbursement of Rs. 1,15,243/-in 2004-05, which exceeded the disbursement of Rs. 86,981 crore made in 2003-04 by 32%. These measures are expected to lead to a reversal of the deceleration in agricultural growth.

MSP of Cotton in Maharashtra

4663. SHRI BALAVANT *Alias* BAL APTE:

SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the minimum support price of cotton fixed by Maharashtra Government and other State Government in this year;

(b) the details of Agriculture Price Commission's recommendation in this regard, indicating the cost of production of cotton in different areas; and

(c) how far the farmer's interests have been safeguarded thereby

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA):(a) Fixation of Minimum Support Price (MSP) does not come under the purview of the State Governments, including Maharashtra. Based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the Government of India has fixed the MSP for the basic varieties of cotton (kapas) F-414/H-777/J-34 at Rs. 17607- per quintal and for H-4 at Rs. 1980/- per quintal for 2005-06 season. The C2 cost of production (actual expenses paid in cash and kind, rent